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ABSTRACT

Data gathered through ethnographic observations of 25 college students in an adolescent literature course were used to develop a substantive grounded theory of the process of involving students in a class. In addition to observation of the class, data were collected through teacher and student interviews and from lesson plans, class handouts, examination papers, grades, and student course evaluations. Data analysis focused on discovering those teaching processes that resulted in enthusiastic student response to the teacher and to the class. Results yielded a model of the social psychological process of involvement that includes two defining characteristics--reciprocity and recursiveness--and six subprocesses of involving--acclimating, evoking, establishing rapport, staging, elucidating, and expressing purpose. These subprocesses designate a series of purposeful actions and speech acts that lead to the creation of involving events in a classroom and, together, they and their attendant strategies, conditions, and dimensions comprise a taxonomy of teacher behaviors. The data analysis supports the notion that student involvement is a central variable in the teaching process. (The primary concepts of the taxonomy emerging in the study are illustrated with excerpts from the extensive fieldnotes and interview transcripts.) (FL)

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A Grounded Theory of the Social Psychological Process of Involving College Students in a Course on Adolescent Literature

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Running Head: Involving

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Abstract

Through ethnographic fieldwork and sociological analysis, a substantive grounded theory of generating and sustaining student involvement in a college literature course is developed. "Involving" describes the central social psychological process employed by the teacher of this case study. Six subprocesses implement the core process of involving: acclimating, evoking, establishing rapport, staging, elucidating, expressing purpose. These subprocesses are explained in terms of processes because they designate a series of purposeful actions and speech acts that lead to the creation of involving events in a classroom setting. Together these subprocesses and their attendant strategies, conditions, and dimensions comprise a taxonomy of teacher behaviors. The primary concepts of the taxonomy emerged from the ethnographic data and are illustrated with excerpts from an extensive collection of fieldnotes and transcribed interviews. As applied research, this study has implications for the development of a comprehensive pedagogical theory of involving students in classroom experiences across the curriculum.

A Grounded Theory of the Social Psychological Process of Involving College Students in a Course on Adolescent Literature

Teaching literature requires more of teachers than an understanding and an explication of texts. Strategies for increasing student involvement in texts and for generating student discussion should be sought and implemented. This idea is not new. In Literature as Exploration (1938/1968), Louise Rosenblatt argued that the principal task of literature teachers was to foster "transactions" between students and literary works. Other English educators agreed: Student response to literature was investigated; student-centered strategies for teaching literature were developed. And yet the 1981 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) revealed "that while students learn to read a wide range of material, they develop few skills for examining the nature of the ideas that they take away from their reading," and when students do make interpretations, "they generally do not return to the passage to explain the interpretations they made" (p. 2). Petrosky (1983) suggests that teachers' lack of instructional strategies for encouraging interpretation and substantiation is, in part, responsible for students' limited response modes, and he claims that "there is a paucity of instructional models, procedures, and suggestions for teaching within a transactional view of reading" (p. 81). In other words, many teachers do not appear to have pedagogical strategies for generating student involvement in literary texts or for generating student involvement in classroom discussions on texts.

The terms "involve," "student involvement," and "personal involvement" appear often in publications on the teaching of literature. Even so, no methods specifically aimed at increasing student involvement have been

developed. The absence of empirical research on involving students in classroom activities, including literature discussions, is somewhat surprising because, as Jackson (1968) says, "few topics would seem to have greater relevance for the teacher's work" (p. 85). The concept of involving has appeared as a variable in such studies as Peterson and Clark's (1978) work on teacher judgments, Cooper's (1981) psycholinguistic study on the roles of a college instructor in an engineering class, and Blase's (1982) grounded theory on teacher stress and burnout; but the process of involving has not been investigated as the core concept of any empirical pedagogical research. This study is a beginning. It presents a data-based, social psychological model of the process of involving college students in literature experiences.

Methodology

The research of this study was conducted using sociological research procedures developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978). This methodology is called "grounded theory" because its purpose is the discovery of theory from data collected through ethnographic observations. Such qualitative research focuses on generating interrelated substantive categories and their conditions, dimensions, and strategies. These categories systematically explain a basic social psychological process of the setting under study.

An adolescent literature course offered by the English department at a major southeastern university was the setting of this study. This course was chosen for observation because the teacher, a full professor experienced in both secondary school and college teaching, had consistently received high student ratings in past courses. The class met every Tuesday night from 7 to 10 pm for 16 weeks. Twenty-seven upper-division and graduate students completed the course. The 25 students who filled out the official university

course evaluation form unanimously rated this teacher an "outstanding and stimulating instructor."

The methods used for data collection were participant observation of all of the classes and informant interviewing with the teacher and with ten of the students. The fieldnotes of the classroom observations, also referred to as "protocols," consist of verbatim transcriptions, summaries of interactions and activities, and behavioral descriptions. The interviews, each of which lasted from 45 minutes to an hour and all of which took place after the course had ended, focused on the informants' perceptions of the course--both general and specific--and on the informants' reasons for thinking or feeling as they did about what had occurred. The data also include lesson plans, class handouts, examination papers, grades, and course evaluations.

The analysis and interpretation of the data focused on discovering those teaching processes that resulted in the enthusiastic student response to the teacher of this study and to the class, response that was in abundant evidence in the protocols, interviews, and course evaluations. The analysis of the data proceeded according to Glaser and Strauss' (1967) constant comparative method of grounded theory analysis. Emerging descriptive codes, i.e., categories that describe phenomena recorded in a line or segment of the protocols and transcribed interviews, were refined through constant comparison of one category with another. During the first run through the data, over 120 categories of behavior, speech acts, and events were generated. In successive codings, many categories were subsumed under one concept, subsumptive concepts for a group of related categories were discovered, and some categories were eliminated altogether. Increased abstraction from the substantive categories to more generalizable categories produced conceptual codes of teaching

processes. These codes "earned" their way into the theory after the primary categories were compared for "fit" with the data, for interrelations among themselves, and for their power to generate a pedagogical theory of involving.

The results of the analysis offer a new perspective on the teaching of literature and provide a model of the social psychological process of involving students in a study of literature. The model is grounded in empirical data and was formed without benefit of a predeveloped instrument or of an overarching theory.

A Social Psychological Model of Involving

The outline presented below is of a pedagogical theory of involving that was generated from a grounded theory analysis of empirical data. It includes two defining characteristics and six central subprocesses of involving, with their major properties or strategies; together, these form a taxonomy of teacher behaviors for creating involving events in a literature classroom. The primary concepts used to describe and explain this notion of involving are labeled as processes because they designate purposeful actions and speech acts aimed toward a particular result or consequence. The intended outcome is to solve a central social psychological problem confronting most teachers--how to establish and maintain student involvement.

Defining Characteristics of Involving

- Reciprocity
- Recursiveness

Subprocesses of Involving

- Acclimating
  - Shaping Patterns of Classroom Interaction
  - Explaining Requirements

Evoking

  Attracting

  Inviting

Establishing Rapport

  Disclosing

  Gaming

  Reacting

Staging

  Arranging the Performance

  Performing

Elucidating

  Exemplifying

  Interpreting

Expressing Purpose

  Playfulness

  Responsiveness

The following discussion of the theory explicates the major interrelated concepts used to describe the organizational and interactional behavior patterns of the teacher of this study. Like all grounded theories, this one simply and yet significantly "freezes the on-going for the moment" (Glaser, 1978, p. 129); the theory is neither fixed nor doctrinaire. Rather, concepts other than the ones described here could account for stimulating students to enjoy reading and discussing literature. This theory, however, suggests one way, an effective way.

Defining Characteristics of Involving

The analysis of the data of this study led to the conclusion that the teacher who consistently creates involving events in a literature classroom has many strategies at hand for eliciting active student participation and for making ideas attractive to students. An "involving event" refers to descriptors both overt and tacit: The teacher and students appear to be mutually engaged in an activity of high interest to all, and the teacher and students perceive that they are sharing and experiencing a similar degree of absorption in the activity. The teacher instigates and perpetuates involving events through a command of the forces of reciprocity and recursiveness. Such a teacher is aided by a repertoire of accumulated routines and by a cultivated proficiency of knowing when to push a routine, to back off from it, to amend it, and to wing it. Further, he or she is guided by a sense of mission, of knowing what messages to impart to students, that is, what attitudes and knowledge students should leave the classroom with and perhaps impart to others. Thus "involving," the core concept and the basic social psychological process in this study, explains the variations in the behavior of a teacher who succeeds in creating reciprocally absorbing events in recursive patterns.

"Reciprocity" and "recursiveness" are concepts that characterize the ways in which the six subprocesses of involving are expressed and executed by the teacher. They are forces, in the sense of having the power to maintain and to increase student interest, that seem to be simultaneously within and beyond the teacher's control. Reciprocity is the interactional force that the teacher engenders by directing words and actions toward receiving a show of enthusiasm from students; the teacher is, in turn, affected by this enthusiasm. Recursiveness is the interactional force that comes about through heuristically

derived behaviors that develop into routines used time and again depending on classroom contingencies, i.e., depending on what the teacher and students need at the moment to spur the next involving event. The forces of reciprocity and recursiveness work together to insure that what has been done and what is about to be done are instrumental to each other and to insure the continuation of mutually absorbing events. Together they function to unify the involving teacher's messages and style.

Subprocesses of Involving

In the following sections the six subprocesses that implement the core process of involving are explained and illustrated. Although each subprocess is discussed separately, none stands alone. The subprocesses are interrelated variables that shape classroom events into a coherent experience characterized by meaningful exchanges about adolescent literature.

Examples from the data are used to illustrate the subprocesses. In the verbatim material slashes ("/") rather than other punctuation marks indicate pauses in speech; more than one slash indicates a pause of a second or longer. Also, throughout the protocol excerpts, the teacher is referred to as "T," students by their first name initials.

Acclimating

Acclimating is the subprocess of involving that adapts students to the classroom environment and orients students to the teacher's expectations. Acclimating routines focus on matters of class procedure and class etiquette. Here the teacher's social psychological problems are to make certain that students understand the course requirements and the teacher's preferred instructional modes and to urge students to comply with practices that the teacher has designated as beneficial, desirable, and appropriate. The involving

teacher tempers the demand for student compliance with course requirements by continually making subtle suggestions on how students can comfortably fit into and enjoy the class. The two primary strategies of the acclimating subprocess are shaping patterns of classroom interaction and explaining requirements.

Shaping patterns of classroom interaction. Jackson (1968) says, "Learning to live in a classroom involves, among other things, learning to live in a crowd" (p. 10). Any first class session crowds strangers together into the artificial society of a classroom. To establish a cohesive community devoted to pursuing mutual values, the involving teacher consciously shapes teacher-student and student-student interaction into suitable and advantageous patterns. He or she does so by imposing a set design on the class activities and by establishing dominance.

The basic design of each class of this study included the following activities: opener, shared readings, review, discussion of assigned novel, assignment giving, and farewell. On three occasions small group activities were incorporated. Because openers, shared readings, and small group activities are not usual components of college literature classrooms, a brief description of each is presented below.

"Openers" are a way of getting the class started. They may or may not require active student participation. One evening, for example, the teacher began by reading Shel Silverstein's "Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out." On another evening he began with a word game, and on yet another he read from several books of humorous quotes and then asked students to share their favorite quotes. Openers function to relax both teacher and students.

"Shared readings" refers to the regular segment of this class in which

students told each other about the nonrequired adolescent novels they had recently read. Students had to read and annotate ten such novels in addition to the ten required novels. The teacher usually began these sessions with "What'd you read this week?" Typically students responded by giving descriptive or evaluative responses to novels; these were followed by teacher comments on the books, authors, other books by the same authors, or ways students could use the novels in their term papers. In an interview the teacher stated that the purpose of the shared readings was "to broaden the spectrum of participation// the number of those who participate."

Small group activities gave students the opportunity to discuss assigned readings among themselves, unguided by teacher influence or interests. These activities served both a social and a problem-solving function. One student in an interview described the small group activities as "helpful." When asked to explain in what ways they were helpful, she replied:

> Well/ two ways/ one the fact that we didn't get with the same people everytime . . . and the other thing was it's smaller// you don't have time/ with 30 people as an entire group to say "what do you think/ what do you think"/ with a small group you can get more in-depth.

Managing a smooth-running class not only entails a planned design that suits the subject of the course but also entails that the teacher is able to elicit student cooperation and compliance. The latter is contingent upon the teacher's early success in establishing dominance. During the second class the teacher of this study told students that he expected them to come to class prepared to discuss the evening's novel because, he said, "You're going to enjoy it more/ I'm going to enjoy it more/ and my enjoyment is paramount." Here, accompanied by student laughter, the teacher claimed class leadership.

Of course, one announcement does not establish dominance. This teacher also informed students, on several occasions, that he would be asking questions to which he expected responses, that he would wait for responses, and that he would discourage students from always talking directly to him.

Explaining requirements. Explaining requirements began on the first evening of this class and ended on the night of the final examination. The forms of explanations included making assignments, answering student questions about weekly assignments and course requirements, referring to various ways of carrying out assignments as asides during lessons, and in general ascertaining that students understood the requirements and the ways in which these would be evaluated. The most impressive feature of this teacher's techniques for explaining requirements was that he incorporated his expectations of well-executed student products into his weekly presentations. Requirements were not viewed by the teacher as an extraneous matter; they were instrumental to the efficient and enjoyable performances of all members of the class.

Evoking

Evoking is the subprocess of involving that obtains, maintains, and directs student attention. Through this process the teacher is attempting to solve the social psychological problem of how to captivate an audience, of how to turn students from their other concerns and toward anticipating the class events. Initially evoking functions to focus student attention on the teacher. Its repetition keeps students alert and responsive to designated classroom activities. In effect, the teacher first attracts students by presenting himself or herself as an interesting individual who also happens to be skilled in, say, the understanding and interpretation of literature. The teacher then invites students to speak up, to present themselves, and to engage each other.

Thus the primary evocative strategies in this study are attracting and inviting.

Attracting. A crucial factor in classroom learning, and in teaching well, is that students find the teacher interesting to listen to and to watch. Attracting is the process of getting attention through appearance and manner. It is the desired result of what Goffman (1959) calls "expressions given off." As such, attracting is a performance of "the more theatrical and contextual kind, the non-verbal, presumably unintentional kind, whether this communication be purposely engineered or not" (p. 4). In one interview a student, referring to a doodle he made representing the class of this study as a cabaret, acknowledged the importance of teacher appearance and manner:

> It's supposed to represent that not only is he a physically sort of an energetic person/ but also he's mentally stimulating/ he's mentally always moving around// his imagination is like a tap dance/ it's interesting/ flowing/ it always keeps you interested.

The primary repertoire of actions for managing "expressions given off" that contributed to this teacher's ability to attract student attention can be headed under four categories: relaxing others, moving around, legitimizing dominance, and generating enthusiasm. All four categories entail a complex interweaving of the two dimensions of attracting--the teacher's physical presence and the teacher's display of attitudes.

Friendly gestures, uses of humor, and reassurances that student questions and comments will not be ridiculed all aid in relaxing others and so lessen the social distance between the teacher and students. Relaxing others develops trust. Moving around keeps the audience alert. High physical energy exhibited by varied, perhaps even exaggerated movements, helps to rivet student attention on the teacher.

Legitimizing dominance includes strategies for changing students' perceptions from seeing the teacher as having "positional authority" only to perceiving him or her as having "personal authority" (Webb, 1981) as well. The teacher of this study legitimized his professional status and made himself personally interesting by frequently referring to his writing projects, teaching experiences, and talks with authors of adolescent novels. However, perhaps the most effective means for attracting others to one's interests is to be, or at least appear to be, enthusiastic about those interests. As the data of this study show, enthusiasm is self-perpetuating and can be imparted to and increased by others. What may begin as a phony display by the teacher can quickly be transformed into the genuine item by the audience's excited reception to the feigned, but nevertheless enjoyable, performance. For instance, before going into the classroom to teach Golding's Lord of the Flies, this teacher said that he had a hard time getting interested in the novel this time around. But he introduced his presentation with "we'll have an adventure tonight" and maintained an appearance of being excited throughout the evening. Such behavior is more than a reflection of what Goffman (1959) calls "a belief in the part one is playing"; it is playing enthusiastically the part that one believes should be played.

Inviting. Purkey (1978) defines a teacher invitation as "a summary description of messages--verbal and nonverbal, formal and informal--continuously transmitted to students with the intention of informing them that they are responsible, able, and valuable" (p. 3). Further, invitations function to direct student attention and so to sustain student involvement. Throughout the data of this study, the teacher invited students to participate, to think, and to read. Examples of all three types of invitations are exhibited in the

following excerpt from the class on Guest's Ordinary People:

> T says, "Speak to me of Beth." D responds, "Most interesting character I've run across in a long time." She comments further, then asks T a question. He shrugs and remains silent. C and R both start to speak. C speaks, then Y. H comments and T responds. They discuss how Beth dealt with discovering at a party that Con had quit the swimming team. S speaks, then K. T responds to K's comment. "Good line there/ literature often succeeds not because of what it says/ but what it doesn't say." T says that he discovers something new on each reading of Ordinary People. He refers the students to page 64 and reads. He asks, "What else was in bad taste?"

The intentionally inviting teacher is clearly directive and genuinely cares about what students think and feel. Because the inviting teacher perceives students as capable and responsible, student responses are valued even when they disagree with the teacher's beliefs. In fact, the inviting teacher encourages, even challenges, students to see and express possibilities of interpretation other than his or her own.

Establishing Rapport

Establishing rapport is the subprocess of involving that creates a classroom atmosphere conducive to an open, nonthreatening, and personal exchange of ideas. It is not altogether distinct from the evoking subprocess, but is rather a flowering of attracting and inviting that opens the class to the possibility of developing a deeper sense of community and of bringing about reciprocally enjoyed exchanges of thought and experience. The teacher, by deliberately seeking to establish rapport, creates involving events of an interpersonal nature. Three primary strategies for establishing rapport are

disclosing, gaming, and reacting. Each of these strategies results from the teacher's intent to gain favor through a studied spontaneity of expressed personal characteristics and interests and through a sensitive awareness of students' dispositions, feelings, and reactions.

Disclosing. In the teaching of literature, a teacher can bridge the gulf between students' feelings of remoteness to a work and the work itself by revealing how a work has personal value for him or her. Disclosing is a process in which the teacher shares personal experiences, beliefs, and values. Disclosing remarks need not always relate directly to the work, but may be tangential remarks that nevertheless increase student interest. Not insignificantly, an immense advantage of self-revelation is that a bond between the teacher and students is formed and nurtured. Further, some students come to respond in kind and so develop a rapport among themselves. Rosenblatt (1938/1968) says that "a sound response to literature is dependent on the quality of the reader's personal contribution" (p. 106). This holds true also for the teacher of literature.

On an evening the class of this study was audiotaped, the teacher introduced his opener by saying:

> " . . . if you have children or teach young children or/ if you read Playboy/ [laughter] you're probably aware of Shel Silverstein// and this is a Shel Silverstein poem . . . I don't know how well I'll read this// I've got an 'S' defect which you'll now notice for the rest of the evening// 'S' defects manifest themselves especially with a microphone . . . I didn't realize I had this until I was a sophomore in college/ and I was taking Speech 101/ and I built this beautiful schedule for myself where I didn't have any classes at all on Tuesday or Thursday." He con-

tinues to explain that the professor arranged for him to go to the speech clinic on one of his "freed-up" days. "My clinician was absolutely magnificent/ I don't know how she was in speech work/ but [T starts laughing; so does the class]/ she was in [laughing continues]/ and well// this poem presents certain problems because/ as you'll see in a minute/ it's entitled 'Sarah Sylvia Cynthia Stout/ Would Not Take the Garbage Out'."

Two elements of disclosing--presenting self and reflecting aloud--are demonstrated in this excerpt.

Gaming. Gaming is the teaching technique of engaging students in fun and whimsy. It is play for the sake of play and yet it relaxes students and creates a climate for the expansion of the imagination. Preparing for one of the small group activities, the teacher of this study placed students in groups according to their birth dates. He approached the grouping task itself as a game. And here, as the following excerpt shows, there is a game within the grouping game:

T begins the birthday grouping by betting that the odds are, in a group this size, that two people will have the same birth dates. L bets against it but loses because there are two on the same day in February. T, laughing, says, "Didn't we bet a bottle of Chivas?" L says, almost under her breath, "Let's go/ I'm game." She winks. I'm not sure T caught this. Teasing, T says, "I knew I was going to win that bet/ see I had J [me] set up that when we got to December . . . ."

In another grouping game, T gave each student a card containing a quotation or a description of a character. Students were to mingle, discuss their cards, and arrange themselves in groups each representing a different novel. The grouping games were instances of gaming in its most planned and controlled

form: They were rule-governed and teacher-directed. But they were merely interludes--important ones remembered by students in interviews--that complemented the overall playful nature of this teacher's teaching style.

Reacting. Disclosing and gaming establish rapport through the language acts of self-revelation and of sharing one's mirthful ways of thinking. Reacting establishes rapport through the complementary processes of engaging and disengaging student talk. Reacting is not a planned maneuver but is rather an immediate response intended to further the plan of the course and to encourage a "broad spectrum of participation."

Engaging is the reacting strategy of immersing students in the discussion and of sharing one's own reactions to the immediate classroom events. It is a reciprocal process in that the teacher offers a response to a passage or to a student comment and expects that students will be stimulated to share their reactions. Engagements between teacher and students often follow the teacher's invitation to participate. For example, at the close of a discussion on the use of language in Salinger's Catcher in the Rye, T asked:

> "Other comments/ questions/ about that?" After a brief pause, D says, "I haven't read it in a long time// I've forgotton how much I really loved that kid [Holden]/ he's just so good/ so kind/ to everybody/// does term papers// loans his clothes/ feels sorry for the person whose luggage isn't as good as his// he cares so much// it just moves me so/ and of course his own pain is so intense// I just literally got tears in my eyes at that end when he's talking about how beautiful it is to watch his sister go around and around [on the carousel] in that little coat . . . ." T responds, "Wish you could've been there." D says, "Yeah/ right." T says,"And so do I/ wish I could've too." D, "I know/ I know."

This excerpt not only illustrates an emotionally intense focus on a literary passage but, just as significantly, shows two people reacting sincerely and spontaneously to feelings shared.

But the teacher as engager must also be the disengager of teacher-student and student-student talk. Such a teacher needs to know when and where to move the discussion along paths that will engage the entire group in productive talk. Disengaging is the act of rerouting the discussion toward ends that the teacher believes will be most beneficial.

Staging

Staging is the subprocess of involving in which the teacher arranges classroom performances and performs them before the audience of students. The teacher is writer, director, and performer. Unlike the legitimate actor, a teacher rarely enters the classroom stage with scripts memorized and actions rehearsed. Rather, he or she enters with a set of instructional plans and with a set of routines that experience has honed. Artistry in teaching, in contrast to craftsmanship only, entails that the teacher exploit opportunities as they occur, that the teacher stage happenings when the moment is ripe. Such opportunities may be spurred by ideational associations or by student reactions. In either case, the artistic performer embraces the moment and gathers words and actions into a response intended to create reciprocally absorbing events. Two key strategies for effective staging are arranging the performance and performing.

Arranging the Performance. The elements of arranging a classroom performance are setting the stage, enacting the scene, and closing the curtain. These sequential elements transform activity into a show and provide structure for dramatizing one's ideas. The elements describe the parts of an entire

class and may also describe the structure of small shows within the class. Rubin (1983) asks, "What accounts for the fact that some classes are exciting and others are dreary?" And he suggests that "a more 'dramatic' classroom might enhance student commitment" (p. 44). The data of this study support his hypothesis.

For example, the teacher of this study set the stage for his presentation of Cormier's The Chocolate War by saying:

> "I want to take the pivotal line of the book and tell you a little bit about that// 'Do I dare disturb the universe?'" T tells that class that he's going to read parts of Eliot's "The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock" "to give you a rough idea of/ the theme/ of/ The Chocolate War." He reads. "Ok/ what do you want to say about The Chocolate War// do you dare disturb the universe?"

With the stage thus set, the scene was then enacted through student discussion directed by teacher focus and interest. The teacher closed the curtain on this class session with a response to a student question.

> E asks, "Are you saying there's never a time to disturb the universe?"
>
> T answers, "I think there's always a time to disturb the universe/// I think I'm disturbing it now/ but that's neither here nor there/ I don't know."

In an interview one student summarized his description of the class by saying:

> Round robin affair/ interrogation/ we've got games/ we've got a break and/ always a happy ending/ always some kind of food for thought to leave/ to our cars/ go home and think about the books.

Performing. Skills for presenting a novel can resemble the skills of the performing arts--a sense of timing, a show of serious intent, dramatic flair. Showmanship also entails a desire to perform well. Performing well is an aggregate of individual characteristics publicly expressed, of behaviors modeled after other performers, and of strategies developed through experience. Thus a step-by-step guide to successful classroom performance is not possible, nor perhaps advisable. Some useful heuristic devices, however, can be abstracted from successful teaching practice. The data of this study suggest four factors associated with skillful performances in literature classrooms: empathetic imagining, interpretive reading, dramatic vignettes, and word play.

Empathetic imagining is the product of a series of ideational associations triggered by literature, experience, or student response and it is the act of displaying personal involvement in an imaginary situation. Interpretive reading is reading literary passages with intensity and flair and it appears to be an essential factor for enlivening a literature classroom. Dramatic vignettes include descriptive summaries of literary passages, anecdotes, role-playing, even digressions. And word play is the unexpected offering of a relaxed teacher who uses words for sport, for amusement, for diversion, in addition to using words for serious work. All four factors of performing appear "to enhance student commitment" to the class and to the study of literature.

Elucidating

Elucidating is the subprocess of involving in which the teacher presents the substantive material of the course. The effective teacher of literature seeks to investigate ideas by examining their merit through dialogue--through private dialogue with the literary work and through open dialogue in class with students. The previously discussed subprocesses--acclimating, evoking,

establishing rapport, staging--together comprise the foundation for elucidating. Elucidating occurs after a prepared teacher summons students to discover the unique ways different literary works express experience and to discover insights presented in or abstracted from those works. It requires curious, receptive students who are prepared to enjoy the show and a teacher who enthusiastically performs. The basic social psychological problem of elucidating is how to make the study of literature a reciprocally absorbing event. Two principal strategies for creating elucidating events in a literature classroom are exemplifying and interpreting.

Exemplifying. Exemplifying is the teacher act, through the use of concrete examples, of explaining the distinctive nature of the written expressions of an author and of clarifying the ideas, events, and characterizations an author expresses. Lively, colorful oral examples create vivid impressions, intended and otherwise, concerning a passage or an idea. In the data of this study, four methods of exemplifying were encountered: describing, enumerating, comparing, and telling anecdotes. The following excerpt from the protocol on Knowles' A Separate Peace exhibits all four methods:

> T says, "If you like literature that paints pictures// can you do much better than A Separate Peace?// So/ I know something about prep schools/ but not much more than a tourist . . . . I really have a feeling that I know what Devon looks like// and what's my source?/ John Knowles." T refers the class to page 128. "You actually have an interesting juxtaposition here." He reads and then compares this "separate peace" passage to Leper's warlike message in the telegram--"and the peace was over." T asks the class to think about the number of times we get "war language" in the novel. Students give examples one after the other in

an almost chanting fashion. "Why were they jumping out of the tree to begin with?" T thinks that it's a simulation for jumping off of sinking ships. While telling the class to look at page 32, he says, "Eloquent writing/ by the way." He reads and then says, "I'll never forget what I was doing when Kennedy died." He talks some about this then says, "World War II was that for Gene."

Interpreting. In the teaching of literature, "to interpret" usually signals one of two important activities: explaining text and infusing meaning. Although both activities are closely related, the tone of the presentations and the effect of the presentations on students differ. Explaining text brings about a professorial accounting of what the teacher thinks the author or characters did or intended. Infusing meaning imparts a sense of personal reformulation on how a passage or work affected the teacher's thoughts and feelings. Explaining implies authority; infusing demonstrates concentrated interest. Thus interpreting is the fine art of complementing textual explanations with personal insights.

The teacher of this study used more authoritative intonations and postures during his planned discourses on textual explication. And, at these times, students responded by assuming demeanors of diligent learners and by taking notes. These moments of authoritative discourse occurred often but were brief. Professorial accounting was interspersed with anecdotes, questions for students, and student discussion. For example, using a Freudian interpretation to develop a theme in Lord of the Flies, this teacher wrote the terms "id," "ego," and "superego" on the board. He elicited student help in explaining these terms. Then he said:

"All the characters in Lord of the Flies are one big organism." T lists

the outstanding characteristics of each of the major characters on the board and describes the minor characters as "fingers." He says that in the novel "organism reverts to id dominance" and "if it comes down to just thee and me// then watch out." He then says, "The defects of society are/ defects in human nature." He mentions the chase scene in the movie The French Connection and says that he "couldn't help coming out of that movie/ seeing the cars revving up their motors// thinking that there must be something in what Golding is arguing/ that evil is inherent in us all// perhaps best exemplified by Roger." He pauses and then asks, "What comments do you want to make?"

As seen in the excerpt above, this teacher, even when explaining text, imprinted his signature on the explication.

The teacher who reads and presents literature with few defenses against the emotions and memories that some literature inevitably evokes will, in a fashion, elucidate the immense role reading can play in reflecting on and reaffirming the overwhelming richness of the world. And although an elucidating teacher is prepared to support an interpretation with textual evidence, he or she is also open to other interpretations students suggest and support. The elucidating teacher shares insights without forcing conclusions.

Expressing Purpose

Expressing purpose is the subprocess of involving in which the teacher exhibits personal and professional beliefs, interests, and sentiments. Explicit or tacit, heart-felt teacher concerns surface, and surface often. These concerns may, in part, be outlined in the course objectives. But more likely, they are of a cloth so basic to the teacher's personality and present life circumstances that they permeate, ever so subtly, the teacher's textual

emphasis, physical demeanor, and overt messages. Expressing purpose is much more than the verbal expression of pedagogical goals; it is the verbal and nonverbal communication of a teacher's distinctive views on the significance of classroom interaction.

Bloom (1982), in his study of the characteristics of master teachers of pianists and Olympic swimmers, found that master teachers were "remembered primarily for their personal qualities and for the initial encouragement and motivation they gave students to explore the field in a playful way" (p. 664). In other words, these teachers had a knack for communicating their confidence in students and for urging students to explore the depths of their talents. Their purpose was to train champions. They expressed this purpose by encouraging playful exploration and through their responses to students' play. Thus playfulness with ideas and responsiveness to students' exploratory efforts appear to be crucial ingredients in successful teaching, in expressing to students that the substantive material and the class sessions are worthwhile.

"Playfulness" and "responsiveness" both refer to clusters of attributes that have family resemblance. Playfulness includes the attributes of risk-taking, innovation, exploration, openness, and curiosity. Responsiveness includes the attributes of supportiveness, understanding, sensitivity, spontaneity, accessibility, and flexibility. These attributes are expressed through the teacher's use of a variety of strategies for presenting material, through a desire to make the class enjoyable, and through constant inquiries concerning student reactions and concerns. Playfulness is the teacher characteristic that can turn the potentially dull into the aesthetically exciting; responsiveness is the characteristic of a teacher who endeavors to broaden student perspectives and who expects mutual assistance in the efforts. These

two ingredients of expressing purpose are in abundant evidence in the protocols of this study.

In an interview the teacher of this study was asked what he thought was "the most important thing" about teaching literature. He said:

> I think probably the most important thing is to have fun with it/ and certainly/ fun's a subsumptive term/ under that could be the notion that one of the reasons I'm having fun with it is that I'm learning a lot about life/ another reason is that I've seen language beautifully used// so the subsuming reason is fun/ but upper most is/ through literature you learn more about life.

He ended the course by telling students:

> "I've been delighted/ with the response from you// it's been a good good course." He thanks them several times, in several ways. He talks about really enjoying teaching this class. "If you're going to teach it/ enjoy it."

This course was from start to finish enjoyable. The teacher was playful with and responsive to the students and to the texts.

Conclusion

The preceding sections explicated a substantive grounded theory of the process of involving college students in a course on adolescent literature. This theory was systematically generated from an extensive data collection. It was developed for consideration by literature teachers, teacher trainers, and other English educators. The theory, however, offers hypotheses and strategies that apply to areas other than the teaching of literature. Student involvement is a central variable in the teaching process. How to establish and maintain involvement is a social psychological problem that confronts

teachers of all grade levels and in all content areas. A comprehensive pedagogical theory of involving is needed

The study presented here explains the ways in which one teacher involved his students in a literature course. It is a case study, an analysis of one teacher's behaviors, speech acts, and interactions with students. A theory of the process of involving that takes into account most classroom situations and teacher acts cannot be built from one case study. To understand the process more fully and to see if the subprocesses discussed here are generalizable across substantive areas, more empirical research and more theoretical depth must be forthcoming. A comprehensive pedagogical theory of involving can offer educators a theoretical ground for why and how to transform classroom interaction into receptive perception, energetic participation, and vital communication. Dewey (1934/1958) says that when "the natural and the cultivated blend in one, acts of social intercourse are works of art" (p. 63). Involving is a social act that blends the natural spontaneity of the teacher with the teacher's cultivated teaching style. Involving is an art.

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